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# Public Health Update February 21, 2013

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## Flu

Maine CDC reported regional flu activity for the week ending Feb. 16. Weekly updates are available online:

 for Maine: http://go.usa.gov/NoK for the US: http://go.usa.gov/ITB

for the world: http://go.usa.gov/ITK

#### Guidance and recommendations for clinicians:

- Summary of CDC Recommendations for Influenza Antiviral Medications (US CDC): http://go.usa.gov/4Z4h
- Influenza Update for Geriatricians and Other Clinicians Caring for People 65 and Older (US CDC): http://go.usa.gov/4vSF
- Emergency Compounding of an Oral Suspension from Tamiflu (FDA): http://go.usa.gov/4Z9R
- Maine CDC's most recent influenza update: http://go.usa.gov/4ZC4
- Maine CDC's most recent influenza conference call Q&A: http://go.usa.gov/4yeC

#### Guidance and recommendations for the public:

Take everyday measures to prevent the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, but especially after coughing and sneezing. Alcohol-based hand gels can also be used.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes. Germs can spread this way.
- Get vaccinated against the flu. This year's flu vaccine appears to be a good match to the circulating strains, and it is not too late to get vaccinated. Flu vaccine is still available through health care providers and local pharmacies. To find locations where vaccine is available, call 211 or visit www.211maine.org or search by zip code and vaccine type at www.flu.gov
- Consult your health care provider about getting a pneumococcal vaccine for anyone who is younger than 5, between ages 5 and 64 with high risk conditions, or age 65 and older.
- Avoid contact with sick people. If you are at very high risk for complications, you may want to avoid large crowds.

#### If you have the flu:

- Stay home if you are sick, until you are fever-free for a full 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Throw the tissue away.
- Although most people can stay home to recover without seeing a health care provider, it is possible for healthy people to develop severe illness from the flu. Anyone with the flu should seek medical attention for:
  - o Dehydration
  - Trouble breathing
  - o Getting better, then suddenly getting a lot worse
  - Any major change in condition

## Adult smoking

Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the US. Despite overall declines in smoking, more people with mental illness smoke than people without mental illness. Because many people with mental illness smoke, many of them will get sick and die early from smoking.

For more information, see this US CDC Vital Signs feature: http://go.usa.gov/4uxj

## Gonorrhea

US CDC has issued an MMWR describing the growing threat of multidrug-resistant gonorrhea and what public health agencies and partners can do to delay the emergence of cephalosporin-resistant strains, mitigate the public health consequences of expanded resistance, and prevent a return to the era of untreatable gonorrhea. For these strategies and more information, see the MMWR at: http://go.usa.gov/4JY3

A total of 40 confirmed gonorrhea cases have been reported in Maine through Feb. 16, compared to 54 reported cases in 2012 and 19 reported cases in 2011 during the same period. Some cases are reported more than once and may represent reinfection, recurrent infection, or persistent infection.

The majority of cases have been reported in Androscoggin County, followed by Cumberland County. Maine CDC is issuing biweekly gonorrhea surveillance updates. The most recent report is available at: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/4JrF">http://go.usa.gov/4JrF</a>

Current treatment guidelines and reporting requirements are included in this Health Alert from Dec. 4: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/4JY9">http://go.usa.gov/4JY9</a>

## Pertussis (whooping cough)

US CDC has developed a new infographic describing the best ways to protect babies from whooping cough: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/4vHY">http://go.usa.gov/4vHY</a>

Reported cases of pertussis appear to be on a downward trend, but cases do continue to be reported.

DTaP vaccine is recommended for all infants and children. Tdap vaccine is recommended for all preteens, teens, and adults.

Maine CDC encourages health care providers to continue to follow guidelines from the July 31 health alert available at: http://go.usa.gov/Gob.

For guidance and information, visit <a href="http://go.usa.gov/dCO">http://go.usa.gov/dCO</a>

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For clinical consultation and outbreak management guidance, call Maine CDC's toll-free 24-hour phone line: 1-800-821-5821

For questions and potential exposure to poison, call the Poison Center's 24-hour phone line: 1-800-222-1222